

Taking Care of Sore Nipples and Breast Engorgement

Breastfeeding is meant to be a comfortable and pleasant experience. Sometimes, you might encounter some challenges. Two of the most common challenges that you might face include sore nipples and breast engorgement. Here are hints to help you. Remember, call your health care provider or lactation specialist for additional information.

Picture of mother and baby

Sore Nipples

Most of us have heard stories of sore nipples. You can avoid this problem most of the time. Sore nipples are usually caused by the baby's poor positioning and improper latch-on.

Picture of baby on breast

To Prevent Sore Nipples:

- Breastfeed often, approximately every 1 to 3 hours, or on demand.
- Be sure that your baby's positioning is correct. Your baby's ear, shoulder and hip should be in line.
- Wait for your baby to open mouth wide to latch on, at least 1" behind nipple.
- Release the suction before removing your baby from the breast. Do this by placing a clean finger in the inside of baby's mouth between his jaws.
- After nursing baby, express a little milk and massage it into your nipple or areola, then dry.
- Never use soap or alcohol on your breast or nipple.

Picture of Tylenol, etc.

To Manage Sore Nipples:

- Nurse on the least sore side first
- Vary the nursing positions.
- Use cotton bras or bra pads. Change pads as soon as they get wet
- Apply pure lanolin, such as Pure-Lan or Lansinoh, after feeding. You can get these products at a drug store such as Walgreen or Longs or RiteAid.
- Ask your health care provider about using pain reliever such as Tylenol.

Breast Engorgement

During the first week after delivery, as the colostrum is changing to milk, you will notice that your breasts may begin to feel very full, usually around day 3 - 5.

Engorgement may develop if your baby does not adequately remove the milk from your breast. During this time, your breasts may feel swollen and uncomfortable.

To Prevent Breast Engorgement:

- Breastfeed your baby often, especially in the first 3 to 5 days.
- Avoid supplements of water or formula and use of pacifiers for the first 3-4 weeks unless medically indicated.
- Express or pump your milk if you miss any feedings.
- When weaning your baby, do it gradually.

Picture of towel on breast

To Treat Breast Engorgement:

- Apply warm, moist towels to your breast for 2 to 5 minutes before breastfeeding. Express enough milk to soften the areola so that your baby will be able to latch on more easily.
- Ice packs or cold compress should be used between feedings to reduce swelling and pain. •
Find ways to help you relax before and during breastfeeding such as hearing soft music.
- You may take a pain reliever such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen as directed.
- If you continue to have problems, ask for a breastfeeding specialist or consult with your health care provider.

For additional information, please contact

Developed by Kim-Phuc Nguyen MS, Cara T, Mai, MPH, RD and the Santa Clara Valley Breastfeeding Task Force.
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